

U.S. Patent Application No. 09/672,328
 Art Unit: 1625
 Page 2

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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

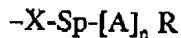
1-7. (cancelled)

8. (currently amended) The pigment product of claim [[1]] 32, wherein said steric group has the formula:



~~wherein X is attached to the pigment and is an arylene group or alkylene group, Sp represents a spacer group, m is an integer of from 1 to 12, p is an integer from 1 to 500, and R is hydrogen, a branched or unbranched alkyl group, or an aromatic group; and wherein the spacer group is a bond or a chemical group selected from the group consisting of: CO₂, O₂C, SO₂, CO, NHCO, CONR", NR"CO₂, OCNR", NR"CONR", O, S, NR", SO₂C₂H₄, arylene, alkylene, NR"CO, NHCO₂, O₂CNH, and NCHONH, wherein R", which can be the same or different, represents an aryl or alkyl group.~~

9. (currently amended) The pigment product of claim [[1]] 32, wherein said steric group has the formula:



~~wherein X is attached to the pigment and is an arylene group or at least an alkylene group; Sp represents a spacer group, A represents an alkylene oxide group of from about 1 to about 12 carbons; p represents an integer of from 1 to 500, and R represents hydrogen, a branched or unbranched alkyl group or an aromatic group wherein A can be the same or different when p is greater than 1; and wherein the spacer group is a bond or a chemical group selected from the group consisting of: CO₂, O₂C, SO₂, CO, NHCO, CONR", NR"CO₂, OCNR", NR"CONR", O, S, NR", SO₂C₂H₄, arylene, alkylene, NR"CO, NHCO₂, O₂CNH, and NCHONH, wherein R", which can be the same or different, represents an aryl or alkyl group.~~

U.S. Patent Application No. 09/672,328
Art Unit: 1625
Page 3

10. (previously presented) The pigment product of claim 9, wherein X is an aromatic group.

11. (cancelled)

12. (previously presented) The pigment product of claim 9, wherein X is substituted with a carboxylic group or a sulfonate group.

13. (previously presented) The pigment product of claim 9, wherein p is from 1 to 25.

14. (previously presented) The pigment product of claim 9, wherein p is from 26 to 50.

15. (previously presented) The pigment product of claim 9, wherein R is an aromatic group.

16. (previously presented) The pigment product of claim 9, wherein m is 2, p is 44-45, R is a methyl group, and X is a benzoyl group.

17. (currently amended) The modified pigment product of claim 9, wherein m is 2, p is 22, R is a methyl group, and X is a benzoyl group.

18. (previously presented) The pigment product of claim 9, wherein m is 2, p is 44-45, R is hydrogen, and X is a benzoyl group.

19. (previously presented) The pigment product of claim 9, wherein m is 2, p is 7, R is a methyl group, and X is a benzoyl group.

20. (cancelled)

U.S. Patent Application No. 09/672,328
Art Unit: 1625
Page 4

21. (currently amended) An ink composition comprising a) at least one liquid vehicle; b) at least one pigment product of claim [[1]] 32.

22. (original) The ink composition of claim 21, wherein said liquid vehicle is aqueous.

23. (original) The ink composition of claim 21, wherein said liquid vehicle is non-aqueous.

24. (original) The ink composition of claim 21, wherein said ink composition is an inkjet ink composition.

25. (original) The ink composition of claim 21, further comprising at least one humectant, at least one binder, at least one dye, at least one biocide, at least one penetrant, at least one surfactant, or combinations thereof.

26-28. (cancelled)

29. (currently amended) A printing plate comprising: a substrate, a protective layer located onto said substrate, and an infrared or near-infrared radiation-absorptive layer located on said protective layer, wherein said radiation-absorptive layer comprises at least one pigment of claim [[1]] 32.

30-31. (cancelled)

32. (new) A carbon black product having attached
a) at least one steric group having the formula $-X-Sp-[(CH_2)_m-O-]^pR$ or $-X-Sp-[A]^pR$,
wherein

X is attached to the pigment and is an arylene group or alkylene group;

U.S. Patent Application No. 09/672,328
Art Unit: 1625
Page 5

Sp represents a spacer group and is a bond or a chemical group selected from the group consisting of: CO₂, O₂C, SO₂, CO, NHCO, CONR", NR"CO₂, OCNR", NR"CONR", O, S, NR", SO₂C₂H₄, arylene, alkylene, NR"CO, NHCO₂, O₂CNH, and NCHONH, wherein R", which can be the same or different, represents an aryl or alkyl group;

m is an integer of from 1 to 12;

p is an integer from 1 to 500;

A represents an alkylene oxide group of from about 1 to about 12 carbons, wherein A can be the same or different when p is greater than 1; and

R is hydrogen, a branched or unbranched alkyl group, or an aromatic group; and

b) at least one organic ionic group comprising at least one -COO⁻, -SO₃⁻, -HPO₃⁻, or -PO₃⁻² group with at least one amphiphilic counterion, wherein said amphiphilic counterion has a charge opposite to that of said organic ionic group.

33. (new) A carbon black product having attached

a) at least one steric group having the formula -X-Sp-[polymer]R, wherein

X is attached to the pigment and is an arylene group or alkylene group;

Sp represents a spacer group and is a bond or a chemical group selected from the group consisting of: CO₂, O₂C, SO₂, CO, NHCO, CONR", NR"CO₂, OCNR", NR"CONR", O, S, NR", SO₂C₂H₄, arylene, alkylene, NR"CO, NHCO₂, O₂CNH, and NCHONH, wherein R", which can be the same or different, represents an aryl or alkyl group

"polymer" represents a polymeric group having repeating monomer groups, multiple monomer groups, or both, optionally having at least one -X' group, wherein X' is an aromatic group, arylene group, alkyl group, or alkylene group, each X' and X can be the same or different; and the total amount of monomer groups of "polymer" is not greater than about 500 monomer repeating units;

R is hydrogen, a bond, a branched or unbranched alkyl group, or an aromatic group and when R represents a bond, R optionally bonds to said pigment; and

U.S. Patent Application No. 09/672,328
Art Unit: 1625
Page 6

b) at least one organic ionic group comprising at least one $-COO^-$, $-SO_3^-$, $-HPO_3^-$, or $-PO_3^{2-}$ group with at least one amphiphilic counterion, wherein said amphiphilic counterion has a charge opposite to that of said organic ionic group.

34. (new) An ink composition comprising a) at least one liquid vehicle; b) at least one pigment product of claim 33.

35. (new) The ink composition of claim 34, wherein said liquid vehicle is aqueous.

36. (new) The ink composition of claim 34, wherein said liquid vehicle is non-aqueous.

37. (new) The ink composition of claim 34, wherein said ink composition is an inkjet ink composition.

38. (new) The ink composition of claim 34, further comprising at least one humectant, at least one binder, at least one dye, at least one biocide, at least one penetrant, at least one surfactant, or combinations thereof.

39. (new) A printing plate comprising: a substrate, a protective layer located onto said substrate, and an infrared or near-infrared radiation-absorptive layer located on said protective layer, wherein said radiation-absorptive layer comprises at least one pigment of claim 33.